



HR0212

LRB099 11138 MST 31606 r

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois House of Representatives are honored to recognize Joe Black, whom in 1952 became the first African-American pitcher to win a World Series game; and

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WHEREAS, Joe Black was born on February 8, 1924, one of 6 children raised by his parents, Martha and Joseph Black; he was an American right-handed pitcher in the Negro Leagues and in Major League Baseball, playing for the Brooklyn Dodgers, Cincinnati Redlegs, and Washington Senators; and

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WHEREAS, Joe Black was a native of Plainfield, New Jersey; he starred at Plainfield High School and attended Morgan State University on a football scholarship, graduating in 1950; he later received an honorary doctorate from Shaw University; he was a member of the Omega Psi Phi fraternity and appears prominently in Roger Kahn's classic book, The Boys of Summer; and

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WHEREAS, Joe Black helped the Baltimore Elite Giants of the Negro Leagues win 2 championships in 7 years; he and Jackie Robinson pushed for a pension plan for Negro League players and was instrumental in the inclusion of players who played before 1944; he then played for a year in the Brooklyn Dodgers' minor

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1 league system; and

2 WHEREAS, The Dodgers promoted Joe Black to the major
3 leagues in 1952 at the age of 28, 5 years after teammate Jackie
4 Robinson broke baseball's color barrier; he was a roommate and
5 friend of Jackie Robinson while with Brooklyn, and was dominant
6 coming out of the bullpen; he was chosen Rookie of the Year
7 after winning 15 games and saving 15 others for the National
8 League champions; Dodgers manager Chuck Dressen brought him out
9 of the bullpen and started him 3 times in 7 days in the 1952
10 World Series against the New York Yankees; he won the opener
11 with a 6-hitter over Allie Reynolds, 4-2; and

12 WHEREAS, After Joe Black's baseball career ended, he
13 remained in baseball through his affiliation with the
14 commissioner's office where he consulted with players about
15 making good career choices; he also returned to Plainfield, New
16 Jersey to teach health and physical education at Hubbard Junior
17 High School; he later became the first African-American
18 Vice-President of Transportation with Greyhound in Phoenix,
19 Arizona; he was a founder and board director of the Baseball
20 Assistance Team and worked for the Arizona Diamondbacks in
21 community relations after they joined the National League; he
22 was a regular in the Diamondbacks' dugout during batting
23 practice and in the press box; in his spare time, he also wrote
24 a syndicated column, "By The Way" for Ebony magazine and an

1 autobiography, *Ain't Nobody Better Than You*; and

2 WHEREAS, Joe Black is heralded for his achievements in
3 baseball; the Arizona Fall League honors his legacy by naming
4 its MVP award the "Joe Black MVP Award" and the NAACP awarded
5 him a Lifetime Achievement Award; in 1957, he became the first
6 African-American player on the Washington Senators, and
7 Washington, D.C.'s current team, the Nationals, annually
8 present the "Joe Black Award" to a Washington-area organization
9 that promotes baseball in African-American communities; and

10 WHEREAS, Joe Black was raised by his parents to have strong
11 family valued and work ethic; he passed on those principles to
12 his 2 children, Joseph Frank Black and Martha Jo Black; his
13 daughter, Martha Jo, named after his mother, continues his
14 baseball legacy and currently works for the Chicago White Sox;
15 and

16 WHEREAS, Joe Black passed away on May 17, 2002 from
17 prostate cancer at the age of 78; his impact and leadership on
18 the baseball, corporate, and entertainment communities will
19 never be forgotten; therefore, be it

20 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
21 NINETY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we
22 honor Joe Black for being more than a Dodger; and be it further

1 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
2 presented to Martha Jo Black as a symbol of our remembrance and
3 respect for Joe Black's leadership.